the Pilot Projects and its validation. The final number of water bodies to be restored will be estimated when the comprehensive scheme is prepared after the completion of the pilot project.

Proposal for "Palaces-on-sea"

*319. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to plan "Palaces-on-sea";

(b) if so, details of the action plan;

(c) the areas where these ships will cruise along our coastline; and

(d) how far this would help to improve the economy of the coastal population?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Recovery of dues

*320. SHRI R.K. ANAND: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that thousands of crores of rupees are outstanding for long but due to grant of stay by the courts, settlement commission, IATA and income-tax authorities etc., the recovery of the same has been held up;

(b) if so, the steps taken to get the stay orders vacated and to recover the amount; and

(c) whether the financial condition of Government indicts laxity in the recovery of these dues?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Recovery of tax arrears is a continuous process. Apart from statutory actions like charging of interest, levy of penalty and attachment and sale of property, administrative actions are also taken to recover the amount and to get the stay orders vacated.

2. So far as Direct Taxes are concerned, various steps taken by the Government, *inter-alia*, include:

* Provision has been made in the Income Tax Act which makes it obligatory for the ITAT to dispose of appeals where stay has been granted, within 6 months.

* A Task force for Recovery of Arrears has been constituted at Delhi with core committees at the regional levels with a view to developing a multi-pronged strategy for collection of tax arrears.

* The Departmental representatives/counsels are making constant efforts to get the stay orders vacated granted by various authorities/courts.

* The Income Tax Authorities will now grant stay in rare and most deserving cases only.

* The President of the Settlement Commission has been requested to dispose of high demand cases on priority.

3. So far as Indirect Taxes are concerned, various steps taken by the Government, *inter-alia*, include:

* Creation of a special task force for realization of outstanding arrears.

* The Finance Act, 2002 has introuduced a clause which automatically vacates the stay orders of CESTAT in case the appeal is not disposed of within 180 days.

* Appointment of special counsels to defend the interests of the Department in cases having major revenue implications.

* Proper and sustained monitoring of pending cases before Appellate Authorities including tribunals and courts.

* Prompt action for recovery of realizable arrears of duty.

4. All possible steps recovery of arrears are being taken by the Government and there is no laxity.